

SOLUTIONS, By Dr. Boendradatt Tewarie on Sunday the 21st of October 2018 to Floods.

We must start with the hills. No quarrying and abandonment of overburden to come down as mud and silt into the rivers.

No building construction above the 300 ft contour line.(I put that in place when I was Minister of Planning. I do not know if it still holds)

No slash and burn agriculture on the hillsides. This must stop.

No additional squatting on the hills. This has to end.

A comprehensive, rational plan for squatter regularisation across the country with support infrastructure that takes heed of sound environmental practices and which does not entrench squatter communities that are a source of the problem and / or add to the problem.

A humane, fair, rational land for the landless programme with effective State support and community, self help participation and job creation.

An effective housing programme for the working poor. There is an HDC waiting list of nearly 140 000 applicants. Clean the list, prioritize fairly, establish a transparent system. Build homes that will create jobs through State development, private developments, public/ private partnerships and State/ Community partnerships.

Take a hard line on squatting once effective land for the landless programmes, squatter regularisation and home construction programmes are in place.

Initiate a comprehensive national plan for clearing of water courses, including rivers , streams and drains; link this to water capture through retention ponds and other tried and tested measures, link these to irrigation for farmers and a food production thrust, link these to Community development initiatives and land and Community conservation initiatives including tree planting, beautification, leisure and pleasure spaces and community tourist destination attractions.

This must be a collaboration of Central Government, Local Government, Civic Organizations, Community groups and individuals and private sector resource based and technical expertise support.

Such a comprehensive programme will take about 18 months to two years of work. But it will be well worth it and lay the ground for effective maintenance thereafter.

Finally this must all be done within a framework for Sustainable Development, with a recognition of the implications of Climate Change and a deep concern for environmental and ecological conservation and the need for sensible, sustainable practices. Water capture, conservation and deployment are things that we must pay particular attention to in a world in which a food, water, energy stress nexus is already emerging and in which water scarcity is already a reality.

These are some simple, initial elements of a series of actions, which as part of a carefully thought through, well integrated and inclusive national plan can make a decisive, long term difference.

We can do better. We deserve better. We must provide solution leadership to advance the development process.

I share these with you citizens and friends in good faith

My Contribution to Dr Tewarie's Solution is given below. Did it in parts as pressed ENTER.

Love the first solution Dr. Tewarie. I was about to add some more info and pressed the enter key too quickly. A beautiful start to the solution process. Dr. Rowley in his 1 hour plus CNC3 Press Conference yesterday, along with his government's team, finally highlighted what were the reasons why we are where we are today. He spoke of planned and unplanned developments in the past and noted, that even with the planned developments, Greenvale and Diamond Vale, not enough attention was placed on the drainage function, both internal and external watercourse drainage. The lack of proper supervision of building on river banks was a great contributing factor, where in some cases, persons in need of homes remove the dirt in the banks and provide leakage points for heavy water flow in the Caroni River, in particular, to filter into the surrounding community. That interview is on my Facebook page Donald Donat Berment. Could not get the link for more sharing. He forgot to mention that no Housing Development Corporation to date, has a Research and development Department, which would have made available to the Policy makers the vast majority of low cost sustainable development design and building solutions for mass supply of homes, with the minimal amount of labour and material cost. He also forgot to mention that no effort was made to engage the full attention, cooperation and collaboration of the professionals, capable of advising on the design, supervision and construction of building structures in a teach and learn environment, as opposed to giving Briefs and Contracts to Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, Pressed the enter key wrongly again. after Surveyors, Housing and Settlement Development Sector Specialists, etc. for the best possible long term solutions. Some of us in the field view the Squatting Problem as in fact to be a solution, to the failure of the managers we put in office every 3 and 5 years to effectively supply the housing need and prefer the term Unplanned Development. A Development if assisted by the collaborative effort above mentioned will give the appropriate guidance to effect safe and affordable housing as per planned development agendas. in addition a Water course Management Authority (WMA) in line with your first mentioned solution, will have River Management Teams, with River Management Wardens every 500 feet of River space. Town and Country Planning Division and all Local Government Corporations must have their approval, supervision and monitoring departments, fully staffed with a minimum of 1 Architect, 1 Structural Engineer, 1 Civil Engineer, 1 Land Surveyor, 1 Quantity Surveyor and Draughtsmen to assist these professionals. When we give full respect to our citizens need to have the best minds work on our most pressing needs, leaving the people who study policy making, to do just that, acting on the advice of the experts. The Psycho-social concerns in housing communities can be given due attention in separate Institutions as is the legal concerns. Two critical elements necessary for holistic Housing and Settlement Development. A lot more can be said, but that is for another day when we get the managers we vote for with the sensitivity to appreciate the full meaning of Best Practice Democracy, working with people from the ground up.

Signed.....Donald D. Berment, Specialist, HSDS/NGA/DVC.

Housing and Settlement Development Sector/Natural Growth Architect/Domestic Violence Counsellor.